

The Connection

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

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Meet Joe David Rice: Speaker for the 2019 Annual Retirees' Association Meeting

October 24, 2019, 11:00am
Bishop Park, Bryant, Arkansas

Joe David Rice served as Arkansas's tourism director for 30 years; he has received national acclaim from the National Recreation & Parks Association and the National Park Service during his tenure, and he also served two terms as Chair of the National Council of State Tourism Directors.

He is the author of two books: called, "Arkansas Backstories: Quirks, Characters, and Curiosities of the Natural State," and "Arkansas Backstories: Quirks, Characters, and Curiosities of the Natural State, Vol. 2", the books include some of the amazing stories about the people, places, and curiosities of Arkansas. The first book includes topics that begin with letters A through L; the second, Vol.2. covers topics M through Z. Joe Davis Rice and the books were the subjects of a recent article by Rex Nelson in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, August 3, 2019. Mr. Steve Barnes interviewed Joe David Rice on his AETN show on Monday August 12, 2019.



Dickerson elected to the ASHERS Board of Trustees

Larry Dickerson was elected to be the retirees' representative on the ASHERS Board of Trustees in June 2019; his two-year term began July 1, 2019. Larry began employment with the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department in July of 1987 as Assistant Fiscal Officer. Prior to coming to work at the AHTD, Dickerson worked with the Arkansas Legislative Audit for 13 years. He was promoted to Chief Fiscal Officer at the beginning of 1988 and in addition held the position of Executive Secretary for the Arkansas State Highway Employees' Retirement System (ASHERS).

During the 2014 legislative session, the Executive Secretary position was separated from the role of Chief Fiscal Officer. This separation of responsibilities was needed due to the growth of ASHERS, IRS regulations and to maintain the viability of the plan, thereby providing a better product for the employees and retirees. Larry took that title in March 2015. He served for one year and retired from the Department in June 2016. In total, Dickerson completed 42 years with the State of Arkansas.

He is a 1970 graduate of Little Rock McClellan High School and a 1974 graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock earning a bachelor's degree in Accounting. Larry is a Certified Public Accountant, inactive.

Address and Beneficiary Changes



2019 Statewide Officers: From left to right, John Watkins –Sr. Vice President; Mike Limbird – President; and Doyle Hughes –Secretary/Treasurer.
(Not Pictured – David Mayo- Vice-President)

Attention all retirees, if you move, please notify RoShunda Colclough at the Arkansas State Highway Employees' Retirement Office at (501) 569-2532. Besides keeping your address and phone number current, you also need to keep your beneficiaries current. You should contact the Group Insurance Office at (501) 569-2417 for beneficiary updates on your group health or life insurance. Since 2001, the Retirement System provides an additional lump-sum benefit of \$7,500 payable to your beneficiary at the retiree's death. If you have any questions about this benefit or the beneficiary for this benefit, please call (501) 569-2532.



AHTD Retirees' Association Facebook Page

The ARDOT Retirees' Association has a Facebook page that was set up and is maintained by Bettye Johnson. Our Facebook page is being enjoyed by many across the State. If you haven't checked it out, please do so at www.facebook.com and search for "AHTD Retirees Association." You may see some folks you haven't seen in a while. Please send any pictures and info to Bettye Johnson at bcj41@cablelynx.com.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) CALCULATIONS:

Why is the ASHERS COLA different from Social Security COLA?

The difference between COLAs awarded by ASHERS and Social Security boils down to timing. The calendar dates used in the calculations are different.

ASHERS:

As detailed in the ASHERS code, the COLA awarded is the lesser of 3% or the percentage change in *December* figures of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). In a year when this calculation results in a negative percentage, "0" will be awarded. In other words, your gross annuity will not be less than your previous year's gross annuity.

Social Security Administration (SSA):

SSA uses an average of *July, August and September* figures shown on the CPI-W to calculate the COLA. With that exception, the calculation is the same as ASHERS. You may remember in 2015, Social Security did not award a COLA, because the calculation between 2014 and 2015 numbers resulted in a negative percentage; however, when the 2016 COLA was calculated, data for the two-year period of 2014 through 2016 was used.

How is the ASHERS COLA calculated?

As indicated above, the ASHERS COLA is calculated using the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). (Link: <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/STATS/cpiw.html>)

The COLA effective July 2019 was calculated as follows:

Using the CPI-W, the difference between December 2018 and December 2017 is divided by December 2017 figure and multiplied by 100.

$$\frac{\text{December 2018 (244.786)} - \text{December 2017 (240.526)}}{\text{December 2017 (240.526)}} \times 100 = \mathbf{1.77\% \text{ COLA effective July 2019}}$$

Note: Previously, the monthly healthcare offset was added to your gross annuity for application of the annual COLA. Beginning FY2020, the healthcare offset will not be added to the gross annuity for the COLA calculation. You will continue to receive a monthly healthcare offset; however, going forward it will not be subject to a COLA increase.



2019 Annual Retirees' Association Meeting

October 24, 2019, 11:00am
Bishop Park, Bryant, Arkansas

Special Guest Speaker Joe David Rice

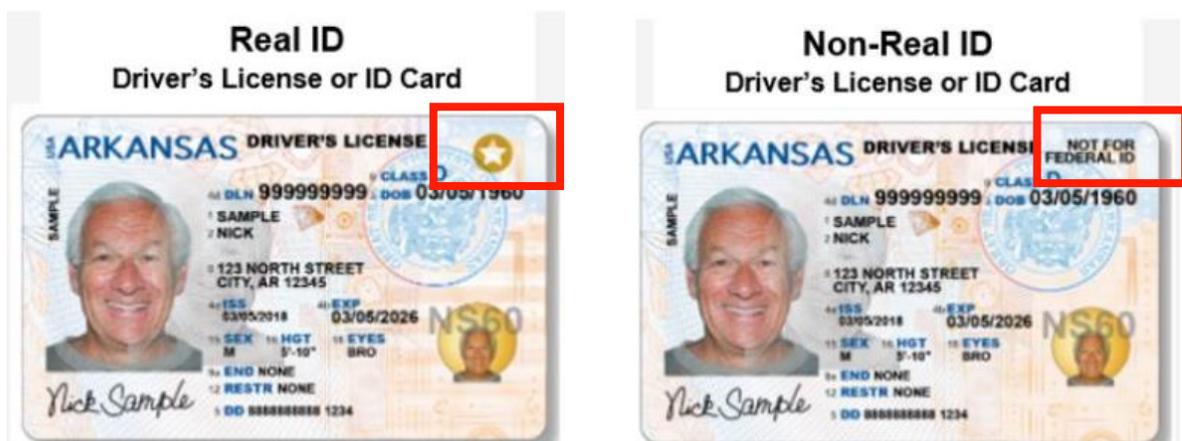
Don't miss out on food, fun, fellowship, door prizes and valuable information!!!

REAL ID

The Real ID Act of 2005 was enacted May 11, 2005, by an [Act of Congress](#) that modifies [U.S. federal law](#) pertaining to [security](#), [authentication](#), and issuance procedures [standards](#) for [state driver's licenses](#) and [identity documents](#), as well as various [immigration](#) issues pertaining to [terrorism](#). The law sets forth requirements for state driver's licenses and ID cards to be accepted by the federal government for "official purposes"; the Secretary of Homeland Security has defined "official purposes" as boarding commercially operated airline flights, and entering federal buildings and nuclear power plants, although the law gives the Secretary the unlimited authority to require a "federal identification" for any other purposes. **There were four planned implementation phases; we are now in the Phase 4; the last phase, air travel, has a deadline of October 1, 2020 – extensions no longer granted. On October 1, 2020, anyone who boards a domestic flight or enters a federal building will either need a Voluntary Enhanced Security Driver's License (DL) or Identification Card (ID) or will need to provide a regular card and additional accepted forms of identification.** Arkansas is taking part in the federal nationwide initiative to improve the security of state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards; on October 1, 2020, anyone who boards a domestic flight or enters a federal building will either need an Arkansas Voluntary Enhanced Security Driver's License (DL) or Identification Card (ID), or will need to provide a regular card and additional accepted forms of identification. **The new state driver's licenses and ID cards will contain a gold star near the upper right corner.**

As of October 3, 2016, you have two options when applying for or renewing a driver's license or identification card: a) choose the new Arkansas Voluntary Enhanced Security DL or ID (This new card will be compliant with the Federal "REAL ID Act of 2005," and will provide enhanced security from fraud and identity theft. The new card will cost the same as a regular DL or ID card) or b) choose to renew your regular DL or ID cards, which are not compliant with the Federal "REAL ID Act of 2005" (The non-compliant cards will be marked, "Not for Federal Identification.).

All applicants for a Real DL/ID MUST provide documentation from the different categories listed below. Each bold print category requires documentation to obtain a Real DL/ID: **Proof of Legal Presence; Proof of identity (secondary); One Proof of Social Security Number; Two Proofs of Residency.** If you have questions and to get a list of the required documentation for each category, please call Ar. Dept. of Finance and Admin. at (501) 682-7059. You can also email questions to Driver.Services@dfa.arkansas.gov.



Chapter Reports

District 1

Roy Morris-Pres. / Jimmy Smith-Vice Pres. / Terry Morris – Secretary-Treasurer

Meets: 2nd Thursday in March, June, Sept. & Dec. at Mikes in Colt, AR.

March 2019 – The District One Chapter of the AHTD Retirees Association met on March 14, 2019 at Mike’s Restaurant in Colt, AR with 25 members and 2 guests present. President Roy Morris conducted our meeting. He reported on the Executive Committee Meeting held in Little Rock on March 6, 2019. Our Next meeting will be held on June 13, 2019. The State Officers and insurance and retirement representatives will be present at that meeting. Everyone enjoyed the meal and fellowship.

June 2019 – District One Chapter of the AHTD Retirees Association met on June 13, 2019 at Mike’s Restaurant in Colt with 24 members and 5 guests present. Our guests were our State President Mike Limbird, Senior Vice President John Watkins, Vice President David Mayo, ASHERS Executive Secretary Robyn Smith, and Insurance Administrator Ronda Walthall. President Roy Morris welcomed our guests and gave each the opportunity to give information and updates from our State Office. Attendance of our Annual State Meeting on October 24th was encouraged. Special speaker will be Joe David Rice. All enjoyed a delicious meal and fellowship after. Next meeting will be held on September 12, 2019.

District 2

Ben Novak-Pres. / Vacant-Vice Pres. / Vacant – Secretary-Treasurer

Meets: 3rd Friday. Quarterly, starting in March (Monticello, Pine Bluff, or Star City) 12:pm

No news

District 3

Don Donaldson-Pres. / Herbert Ross-Vice Pres. / LaVerne Arledge – Secretary-Treasurer

Meets: Quarterly, 2nd Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 10:30am.
CALL (870)777-2814 for meeting places

March 2018 - District Three retirees met March 13 at the Williams Tavern Restaurant in Washington Historic State Park. Eighteen members were present. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer, chapter President Don Donaldson presented a program on the highlights of the latest Highway funding bill (HB 1018) which had been signed by Gov. Hutchinson the day before. A key component, which will have to be voted on by the state’s citizens, would make permanent the .5 cent sales tax previously passed which financed many projects and is due to expire. There was also news on the budget and cost of living adjustment (COLA). The meeting ended with a discussion on the recent flooding in our area and Steve Atchley talked about a bridge in Pike County (on a county road) that needs to be rebuilt but at enormous cost. It can be torn down for much less but the residents of that area would be extremely inconvenienced if that occurs. We were told that grant money for repairs cannot be awarded if a bridge is condemned. Retiree Lonnie Hazel volunteered to cook catfish at the community center in Doddridge in September if there was enough interest. The next meeting is scheduled for June 12, 2019 at Western Sizzlin’ in Nashville, Arkansas.

June 2019 - The summer meeting of District Three retirees was at the Western Sizzlin’ Restaurant in Nashville on June 12th. There were 15 members present, and five State Association members visiting. President Don Donaldson opened the meeting with prayer and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Vinie Holt took the minutes for the secretary who was out of town. Robyn Smith with the Retirement Division gave a brief talk about some changes in the way retirement benefits are calculated. There are changes being made to the contributions of employees and the Department in order to insure future benefits for those that will be retiring later. She reminded attendees to keep beneficiary and contact information current. Robbie Howlett with the Insurance Section spoke and reinforced what Robyn said about the importance of keeping our information up to date. Mike Limbird stated the State Retirees meeting will be Oct. 24 in Bryant and the featured speaker will be Joe David Rice. Also attending was Senior Vice President John Watkins and Vice President David Mayo. Lonnie Hazel agreed to have a fish fry at Doddridge for our chapter meeting on September 11; our treasury will pay for the fish and trimmings. Attendees are asked to bring dessert and whatever they’d like to drink. We agreed to have our Christmas meeting December 11 at Williams Tavern Restaurant in Washington. The meeting was adjourned and food and fellowship were enjoyed by all presents.

Our chapter has recently lost some members and our prayers go out to their families. Mrs. Cathryn Hanson, widow of J. D. Hanson, passed away May 10, 2019 at the age of 93. She attended many of our meetings, assisted by her daughter Sue, and she’ll always be remembered for her friendly smile. Wendell Murry of Emmet died August 11 at the age of 75. He worked for the District 3 Maintenance Division out of Hope.

District 4

Don Griffin-Pres. / Vacant-Vice Pres. / Linda Clark-Secretary / Mary Baker -Treasurer
Meets: 3rd Wednesday, Monthly at Golden Corral, Ft. Smith, 11:00am

July 2019 - At the July meeting, our State Association officers spoke to us. Robyn Smith (ASHERS Executive Secretary) and Ronda Walthall (Insurance Administrator) also reminded us to check on our beneficiaries and any other changes that might apply to our retirement or insurance. The phone number for the Retirement office is (501)569-2532 and for the insurance office, it is (800)422-9833. Since our spring newsletter, we have seen the passing of Ralph Goodson, Dale Spenser, and recently Mel Heath. May they rest in peace. Our next free lunch will be on December 18th. We meet at Golden Corral in Ft. Smith, the 3rd Wednesday of the month. We congregate at 11:00am and eat around 11:30.

District 5

Charles Sherley-Pres. / A.L. "Shorty" Coles-Vice Pres. / Paul Edgemon-Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 2nd Saturday Monthly (Except July & Nov) at Wyatt's, Batesville. 2nd Saturday July & Nov. at Western Sizzlin' in Searcy

No News

District 6

James Sanders-Pres. / Jerry Westerman-Vice Pres. / Mike Selig-Secretary / Richard Blaine-Treasurer
Meets: 1st Monday, Monthly, Baptist Hospital, Gilbreath Conference Ctr., Little Rock, 12:00pm

March 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on March 4, 2019. Our speaker was Mark Christ from the Central Arkansas Library System (CALs). CALs was founded in 1910 and has 13 branches in Pulaski County and one in Perryville. They have notaries on staff at all locations. Some of the various items/activities available includes the ability to rent a telescope, fishing poles, toys, and musical instruments, a small business center, full service kitchen for teaching, and computer/internet access through wifi. CALs also offers movies, digital collections, audio books streaming videos and music services. Discussions were also held by chapter members concerning legislative bills and the effects they would have on ARDOT retirees.

April 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on April 8, 2019. Our speaker was Daniel Cockrell, Youth Education Coordinator for the Old State House. The Old State House was restored in 1885 from ruin when several women's groups came together to save it. In the museum there are collections of artifacts, clothes, quilts, and books from different eras. Phone lists pages were also divided among volunteers to call members to remind them of future meetings. Chapter President James Sanders thanked all of those that helped to assemble the newsletter for mailing.

May 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on May 6, 2019. Our speakers for the meeting were Robyn Smith from ARDOT retirement office and Robbie Howlett from ARDOT insurance office. Robyn reported that the retirement fund balance was currently over \$1.4 billion. She said the Arkansas Legislature made several changes to our retirement system that will keep the retirement funds solvent. Current employees will pay more into the system and employer contributions will increase. The major change to the system for current retirees is there will no longer be raises to the healthcare offset part of retirement. Robbie said that it was too early for assessment of insurance costs for next year. There was concern that our Part D prescription might be dropped. Those of us with Department insurance will be notified by letter in August or September.

June 2019 - Picnic was cancelled due to Arkansas River flooding of Maumelle Park.

July 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on July 7, 2019. Our speaker for the meeting was Paul Tinsley, Staff Engineer, Geotechnical Section of the ARDOT Materials Division. He made a presentation about the ARDOT Landslide Program. The program became more important after the Highway 23 slide during the May 2015 rainfalls. The program has currently identified 176 possible landslide locations throughout the State. New methods for stabilization are being tested with good results and with roadways opened to traffic sooner. Digital tools using drones and google maps are helping with evaluating slides.

August 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on August 5, 2019. Our speaker was Andy Miller presenting Growing Up Amish. He grew up in a family of 7 children, all boys. He said Amish families were large usually with 7-9 children. Andy played a video about Amish life that included culture, religion, farming, weddings, and funerals. He pointed out that the Amish try to have a simple life and honor their faith in God. Andy also displayed several pictures, books and tools. Since the June picnic was cancelled, a bar-b-que lunch with desserts was served to all attendees.

District 7

Michael Nelson – Pres./ Dannie Launius-Vice Pres. / Anna Jane Reddin – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 2nd Thursday, every other month (Starting in January) Cardinal Cafe, Camden, AR 11:00am

May 2019 – District 7 Retirees met at 11:00am on May 8, 2019 at Cardinal Café in Camden, Arkansas. President Mike Nelson called the meeting to order with a total of 23 members and 6 guests present. The guests present were Mike Limbird (State President), David Mayo (State Vice President), Doyle Hughes (State Secretary/Treasurer), Robyn Smith (ASHERS Executive Secretary), and Ronda Walthall (Insurance Administrator). Robyn Smith gave a report on our Retirement System. Ronda Walthall gave a report on our insurance and said she will know more about our insurance rates in October. Mr. Sam Bradshaw said the blessing for the meal. The next meeting will be held July 12, 2019.

District 8

Janet Boozer-Pres. / Don Wilkinson-Vice Pres. / Martha Paine– Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 1st Monday, every other month (starting in February) Western Sizzlin’, Russellville, 11:00am

District 8 retired members meet every other month on the 1st Monday at Western Sizzlin’ in Russellville. Currently there are over 100 paid members. District 8 opens the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag followed with a word of prayer. A declaration of any birthdays and wedding anniversaries are recognized and any known retiree deaths are announced. The meeting is called to order with old and new business. A number is drawn for a free lunch after the meeting. We have had some informative guest speakers to our meetings including Mayor Richard Harris of Russellville and Mr. Steve Burgess from the Arkansas Forestry Commission.

District 9

Bill Phillips-Pres. / James McIntosh-Vice Pres. / Roy Brasel – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 3rd Friday, Quarterly (January, April, July, & October) Western Sizzlin’, Harrison, 11:00am

The District 9 Chapter of the ARDOT Retirees Association met Friday July 26, 2019 at Western Sizzlin’ Steak House in Harrison, for a Dutch buffet lunch and meeting. There were 33 in attendance, including guests. The meeting was called to order by William H. Phillips, President. Mr. Jack Pharis gave thanks for the meal. The door prize of a free meal was won by Mr. Ervin Widner. Insurance and Retirement was discussed. It was noted that we would receive a 1.77% COLA increase and our health insurance would go up around 5%. Also, our Retiree Term Life will increase according to our age bracket and the amount of insurance we select. The next meeting will be October 18, 2019 at Western Sizzlin’ Steak House in Harrison.

District 10

Carlos Lester-Pres. /Claude Parton-Vice Pres. /Vacant – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 1st Tuesday every other month (starting in February), Simpkins Family Buffet, Paragould, 11:00am

No news

NWA

Sam Turner-Pres. /Jerry Stuckey-Vice Pres. /Teresa Maze – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 2nd Tuesday every other month (starting in February), Western Sizzlin’, Springdale, 12:30p

No news

We urge you to fill out the Membership Application Form below. You can turn it in to your local Chapter Secretary/Treasurer or mail application and \$15.00 annual dues to: **Doyle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer, 9112 Leatrice Dr., Little Rock, AR 72227**. Make your check payable to: **AHTD Retirees Association**.

2020 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Retiree Name _____ \$15 Fee Enclosed
 Spouse Name _____ \$10 Fee Enclosed
 Phone Number _____ Year You Retired _____ Division/
 District No. _____
 Address _____ Zip Code _____
 Street or Route & Box No. City State
 E-Mail Address _____
 Signed _____



Tickets for 2019 Statewide Annual Meeting
October 24, 2019
11:00 a.m.
Bishop Park, Bryant Arkansas
\$15.00 Per Person

Come and Enjoy
Dorey's Catering
For a fish fry with all
the trimmings!

District _____
 Name _____ Member _____ Spouse _____

Address to send tickets to: _____

BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER AT BISHOP PARK



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